

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method for preventing polymerization of ~~an~~ acrylic acid during a separation of the acrylic acid from an acrylic acid aqueous solution comprising:
~~the acrylic acid aqueous solution contains~~ containing glyoxal and/or its hydrate;
hydrate
~~the separation is conducted in an azeotropic dehydration column in the presence~~
of an azeotropic solvent; solvent
~~the acrylic acid, the glyoxal and/or its hydrate are separated from the acrylic acid~~
~~aqueous solution and withdrawn from the bottom of the column, wherein;~~
wherein the method comprises withdrawing glyoxal and/or its hydrate from the
bottom of the column in an amount of
~~50% or more of the glyoxal and/or its hydrate with respect to 100% of total~~
~~glyoxal and/or its hydrate contained in the acrylic acid aqueous solution are~~
~~withdrawn from the bottom of the column.~~
2. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the concentration of water in liquid phases at the 3rd to 6th plate of theoretical plates in said azeotropic dehydration column is 0.1 mass % or more.
3. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the concentration of acrylic acid in an aqueous phase of the condensate from the top of said azeotropic dehydration column is 0.5 to 5.0 mass % and a bottom effluent withdrawn from the bottom thereof contains 30% or more of acetic acid contained in the acrylic acid aqueous solution fed into said azeotropic dehydration column.
4. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~an~~ said azeotropic solvent having has a solubility in water of 0.5 mass % or less at room temperature ~~is used~~.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 4, wherein said azeotropic solvent is an aliphatic hydrocarbon having a carbon number of 7 or 8 or an aromatic hydrocarbon having a carbon number of 7 or 8.

6. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the ~~top~~ temperature at the top of said azeotropic dehydration column is 40 to 50°C and the ~~bottom~~-temperature at the bottom thereof is 90 to 110°C.

Amendments to the Abstract

Kindly amend the Abstract as set forth on the attached separate sheet.